

Is There a Haven Anywhere to Happily Ever After

We've heard over the past few weeks of a volcano erupting in Iceland, assumed at first to be doing its usual thing, but soon we heard its lava has spread and is now destroying homes in a town once thought safe. It seems hard any more to find a haven truly immune from disaster.

Another case in point is the city on Maui Hawaii once considered the ideal safe hide-away, and many wealthy families moved there for that reason. Then up came a typhoon whose wild winds and waves razed the place.

I think also of Paradise, Ca. which many considered a God-sent refuge that might live up to its name. Then wild fires, driven by high winds, burned most of it down.

Even we, here in south-east N. Dak. who in 1997 were targeted for a huge flood, now sit high and dry while ice storms wreak havoc on many of the usually flood-safe counties to our west.

All of this tells me Earth offers no dependably safe haven. And many, I think mistakenly, label these random disasters "acts of God." True, according to Genesis, God did take out Sodom and Gomorrah, and later sent the flood that drowned most of the depraved ancient world. But elsewhere in the Bible He swears that "the waters of Noah should never again cover the earth." (Isa 54:9)

To be Biblically consistent, the *acts of God* many speak of are really acts controlled by the fallen angel, Satan, who stole Adam's dominion and became "the god of this world;" the same one that tempted Jesus in the wilderness saying "worship me and I will give you all these kingdoms." It seems Satan had the legal right to exercise the powers that once were Adam's.

Thankfully, there is a place where anyone can find safety and take refuge, and that is not any *place* on earth, but rather in a promise that if we make our hiding place the *presence* of God or "The Secret Place of the Most High." (Psl. 91: 1) that

in the secret place, “there shall no evil befall us nor shall any plague come near your dwelling.”

A beautiful Messianic hymn exalts the safety of this refuge. “I shall dwell in the shadow of his wings/ I shall tell of the joy his Presence brings./ Night may fall but I will not be afraid/ For I’ll dwell in the shadow of his wings.”

Psalm 91 goes on to say, “He shall cover me with His feathers/ and under his wings shall I trust.” (Psl. 91:5).

Let me also cite these timeless lines of poetry from psalm 139:7-10 kjv. “Wither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or wither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning or dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.” If God is in you, you are protected where ever you go.

So if God’s shadow is the one secure place of safety, the question is ‘how do we access His presence when the storm is on the horizon?’ Two scriptures come to mind: “where two or more are gathered in my name, there I AM in their midst.” (Mt 22:10) And, “God inhabits the praises of Israel (Psl 22:3)

It was in hearing preached the second of these promises that we were able to escape being flooded out in 1997. When the water was about a foot from coming into our basement, we began singing praise songs to the Lord, and the water stopped rising and began to recede. We became believers right there.

And I nearly forgot what God had Moses do to make the death angel “pass over” the first-born of the Israelites. He had them paint the blood of a spotless lamb over the lintels and door posts of all their homes.(Ex 12:7) They did, and only the Egyptian first-born were destroyed.

Now, when we hear trouble is out there, we always plead the blood of Jesus, “the lamb of God,” over our lot and our house and the neighborhood. So far, the big storms have missed us. Scoff if you must, but it has worked for us a long time.

So if you face trouble, trust God’s defenses. You should be pleasantly surprised. But you need to have faith that “All God’s promises are *yes and amen,*” and then act on them.

G. Pinkney/ 24-01-19- for the Daily News